

Current Issues & Trends in CTE Research

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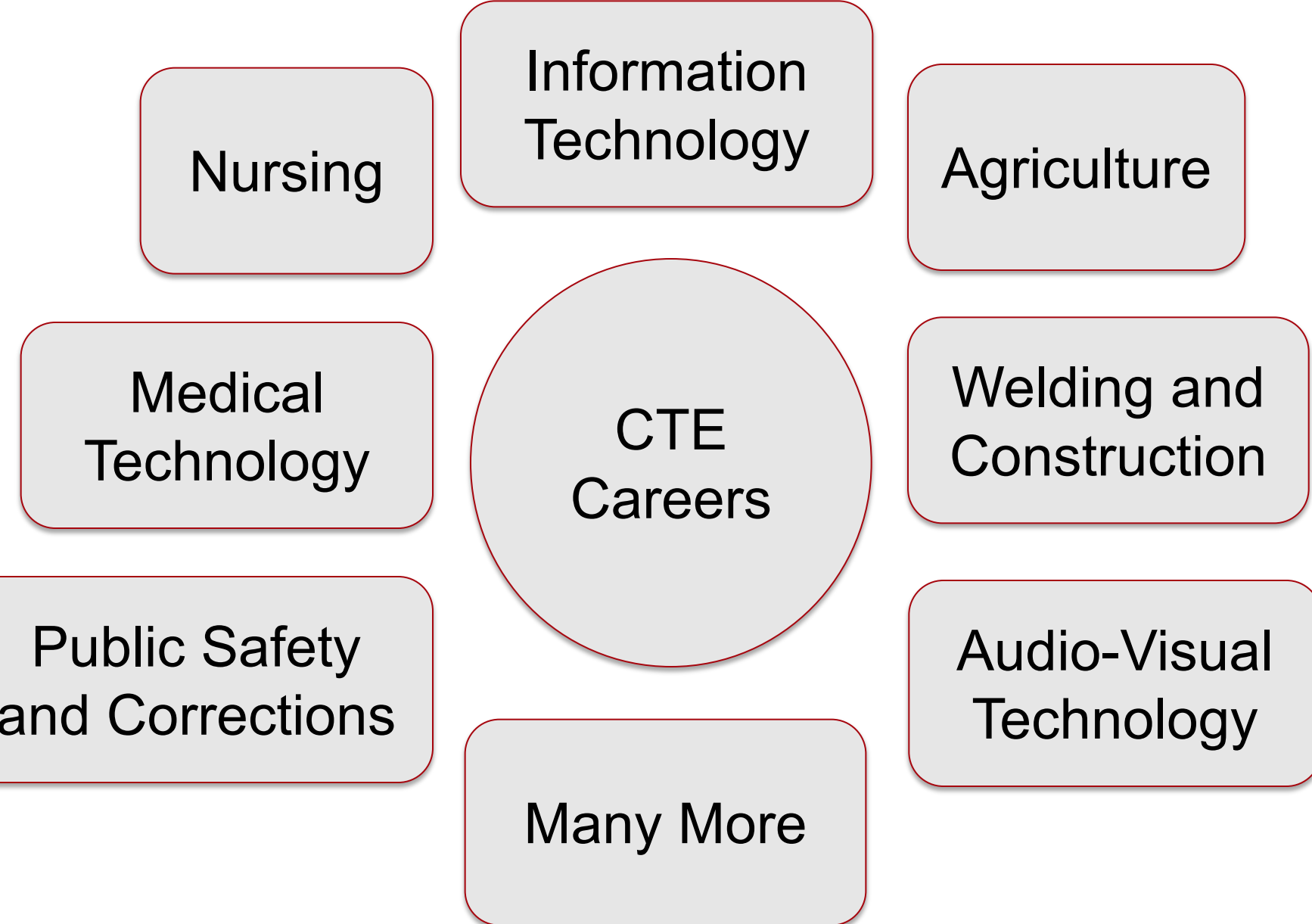
GETTING STARTED

First of all, what is CTE?

CTE, or Career and Technical Education, focuses on education, training, and skills development for a wide range of occupations as well as work-based learning, continuing education/training, and professional development (Field & Guez, 2018). CTE has been known by many different names: vocational education, TVET (technical and vocational education and training), industrial education, manual education, and career education (Gordon, 2014; Grubb & Lazerson, 1975).

What student populations and career clusters are included in CTE?

Students in middle school, high school, and post-secondary institutions can take part in CTE programs and courses. In addition, CTE has a history of serving special education students (Gordon, 2014).



Public Perception of CTE in the U.S.

- Despite rising unemployment levels of college graduates, there is a national feeling in the U.S. that CTE is considered “alternative” education, “for someone else’s child” (Fletcher, Lasonen, & Hernandez, 2014).
- Gradually, public perception of CTE is transforming from being “lesser” to being “different” (Gammill, 2015).
- In some parts of the U.S., many citizens regard CTE with an overall positive outlook and believe that CTE provides an important component to school systems (Baldwin, 2011).

TRENDS AND CURRENT ISSUES

Research from the early 21st century

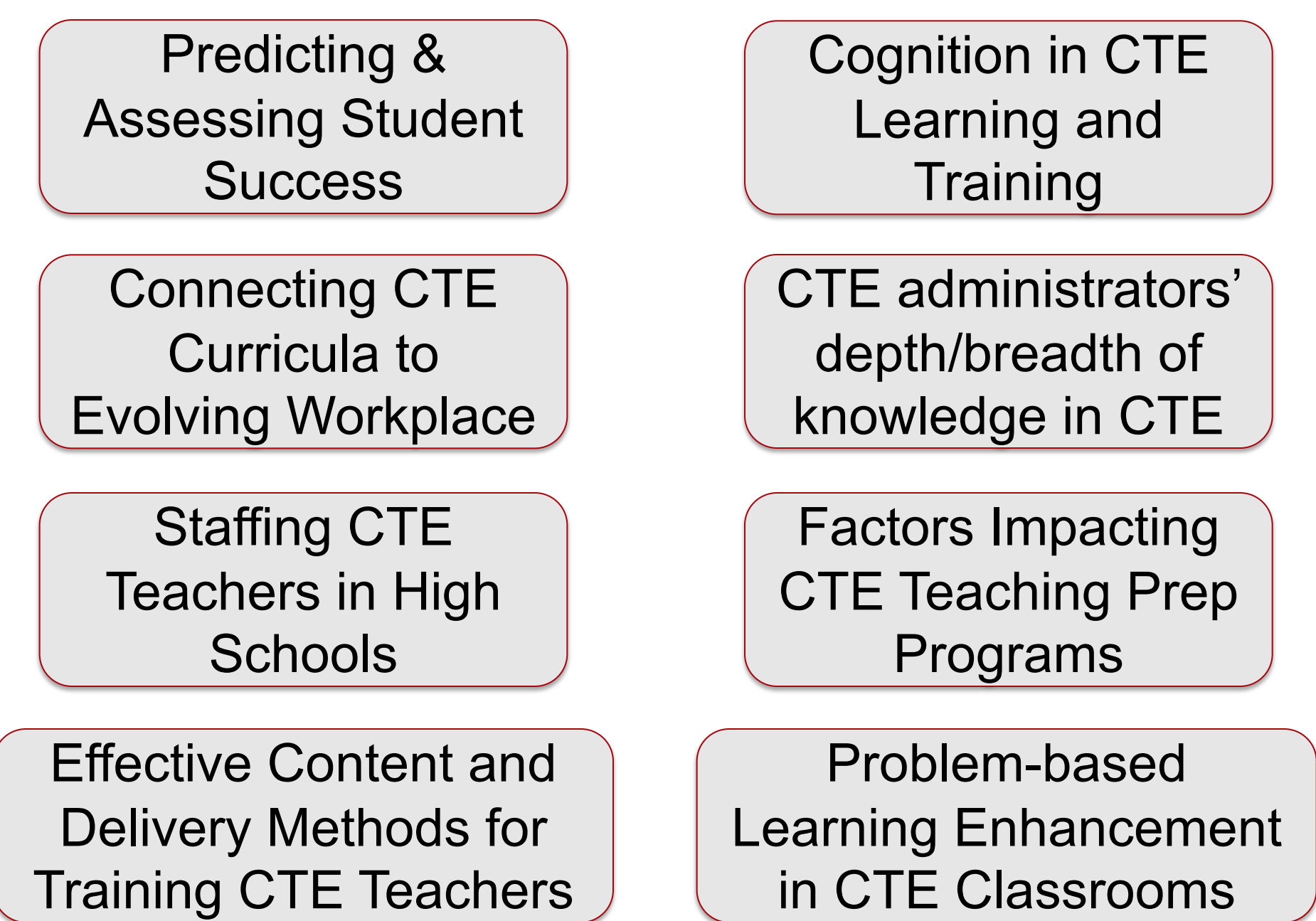
There were several common themes in CTE research from the early 21st century, identified through a literature review of the top three CTE journals of the time (Rojewski, Asyunda, & Kim, 2008).

- Certification & preparation for CTE professionals
- Research on CTE as a field
- Distance education and Internet-based learning
- CTE student characteristics and issues
- Student achievement on standardized tests
- Student proficiency with technology
- Curriculum integration between academic and CTE disciplines



CTE Research Needs in Secondary Education

Several issues in CTE at the secondary level have been identified as being in need of further research (Kosloski & Ritz, 2016).



Content areas of most recent CTE research (ACTE, 2019)

- Advocacy and marketing of CTE
- Strategies for student performance
- Policy and funding issues and approaches
- Business-Community-Education Collaboration
- Staff and administrative education and training
- Access and equity to CTE programs
- Work-based learning credentials
- CTE in postsecondary contexts

(IN)EQUITY IN THE WORKPLACE

Heavy focus on the “skills gap”: employers have trouble finding employees with particular skills (Hora & Benbow, 2016)

Skills gap narrative unequivocally blames higher education – however, “skills gap” argument is deeply flawed. Other issues are more pressing (Hora, 2018).

74% of employers screen for “fit” within their organization’s culture: applicants who have same hobbies, interests, and “attributes” as current employees hired (Rivera, 2012). This reinforces a pattern of dominance.

Internships and “field experiences” thought to be workforce preparation. However, internships are often unpaid, inaccessible to students without financial means and are often used for exploitation (Hora, 2018).

Implications (Hora, 2018)

- Do not teach/train or assess generic, decontextualized skills
- Disciplinary communities need to determine specific skills valued
- Educators/trainers likely need professional development to integrate skills into curricula and instruction (enlist help of specialists in field)

Patterns of Oppression (Ball, 2019)

- Environments where competition > collaboration
- Deviation from “Standard American English” diminishes value of contributions
- Keeping peace > Honest, open discussion

What can be done to interrupt these patterns? (Ball, 2019)

- Value people’s identities and cultures and listen across differences between coworkers.
- Take time to learn how to pronounce people’s names and learn their preferred pronouns.
- Disrupt patterns that perpetuate inequity.

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES

UNEVOC actively publishes research on TVET (technical and vocational education and training). Ohio State University’s CETE is a member of UNEVOC. Recent publications have centered on the following issues and topics.



Education 2030

To ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Shaping educational systems to adapt to migration and displacement (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2018; Gei & Matthes, 2018)

Opening pathways for CTE students to access higher education (Field & Guez, 2018)

Funding skills development through training levies (Chakroun & Daelman, 2018)

Digital credentialing and skills (Chakroun & Keevy, 2018; Fau & Moreau, 2018; Katzer, Kreher, & Zinke, 2018)

WHERE TO FIND PUBLISHED RESEARCH

CTE Academic Journals

The peer-reviewed journals below are the most active in scholarly research on CTE topics:

- Career and Technical Education Research
- Journal of Career and Technical Education
- Technology and Engineering Teacher
- Journal of Technology Studies
- Journal of Career Development